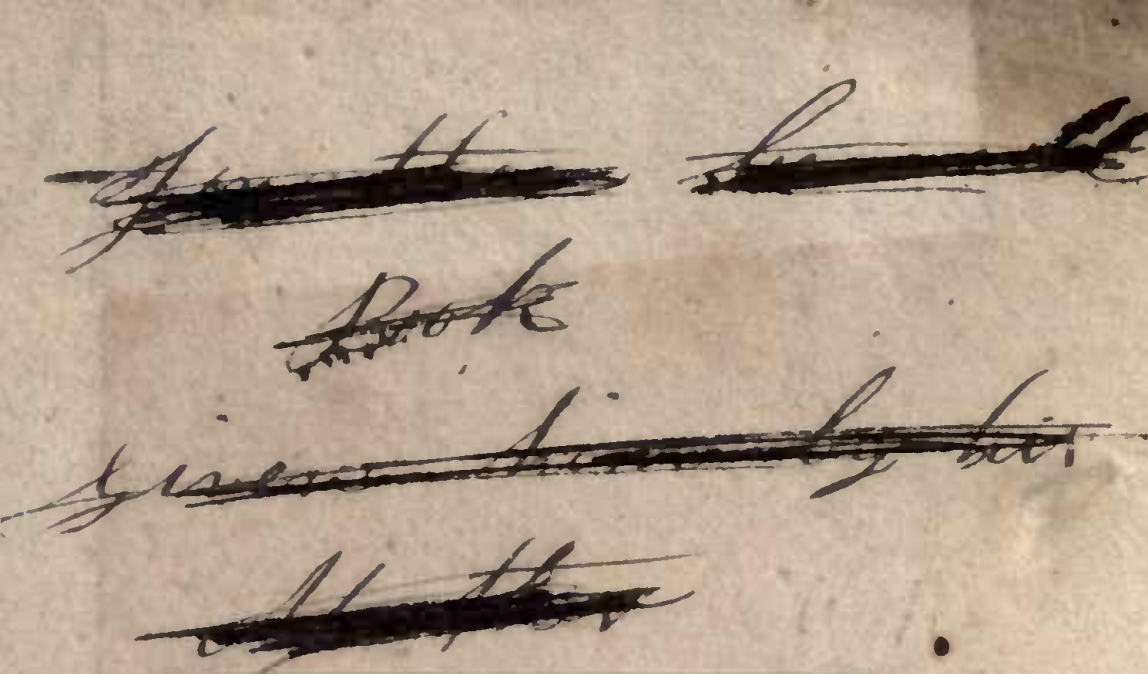

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Page 23

Published by Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme & Brown, London, April, 6, 1816.

THE

FLOWER BASKET.

A FAIRY TALE.

——— I never may believe
These antick fables, nor these fairy toys.

London:
PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN,
PATERNOSTER ROW.

1816.

BARNARD AND FARLEY,
Sumner-Street, London.

PREFACE.

WHOEVER honours the following little Tale with a perusal, will probably anticipate in the Preface, the so-often-framed apology, that it was not written with an intention of being published. Yet stale as the assurance may be, it is in this instance strictly true.

It was composed solely at the request, and for the amusement of, the children of a friend; nor would it ever have entered my head to offer any thing in the shape of a Fairy Tale to this enlightened age, when such productions have long been banished from all juvenile libraries. Among the innumerable works which do so much credit to the talents and invention of the writers, that have been substituted for them, it may admit of a question, whether beings, not professedly ideal, are not sometimes pourtrayed nearly as imaginary as any that ever "wielded wand, or worked a spell." I believe (for I have never happened to meet with the book since it was first published) I have the sanction of one of the most celebrated female writers of the age, in her "Thoughts on the Education of a Young

Princess," for supposing that the mind of a child is less likely to be misled by what is avowedly fictitious, than by those high wrought characters of perfection, which they would have little better chance of meeting with in the world, than with the fantastic agents of Oberon.

However true this may be, I certainly did not feel entitled to oppose my sentiments to popular opinion; but the few friends, to whose inspection this trifle was submitted, pronounced it worthy of publication. I am aware, that it may be said, more partiality than judgment was evinced in this decision; but there was amongst the number, one whose knowledge of the public taste cannot be disputed, and whose name, affixed as the publisher, may be considered as a passport in itself. Under such unquestionable recommendation, I am induced to hope, that "The Flower Basket" may find admittance into the literary collections of the youthful members of society; and, though conscious that it will add nothing to their store of information, I flatter myself it will not diminish the correctness of their principles.

FLOWER BASKET.

A FAIRY TALE.

ADRIAN and Amaranthé were born in an old castle, that had once been the scene of splendour and festivity, but, together with the fortunes of its owners, had fallen very much into decay. Their parents, in proud resentment of the fancied neglect and ingratitude of the world, had lived retired in the only habitable part of it from the time of their birth, associating but little with the surrounding neighbourhood. The world, however, is not ungrateful, nor neglectful of real merit, but it is wise, and when people squander their fortunes rather with a view to display their own consequence than to gratify or benefit their fellow beings, they must not expect that others will come forward to re-instate them in their grandeur, though they would readily do so to relieve unavoidable distress.

The establishment consisted of a few domestics, and an old governess who was retained in that capacity rather from known worthiness of character and attachment to the family, than from any knowledge or acquirements she possessed, that befitted her for such an office. There was besides a little orphan girl, a niece of the lady's, who had been bred up with them from the time she was five years of age. From the disadvantages under which they laboured, it may be supposed these poor children had not many attractions to boast of. Adrian had the benefit of rather more education than his sister and cousin, as his father would sometimes devote himself to his instruction, but listless from disappointment, and out of humour with a world in which he despaired of his son ever appearing with the distinctions of rank and fortune, his lessons were never regularly given, or enforced in a manner likely to make any profitable impression on the mind of a playful thoughtless boy. He had a good natural disposition, was spirited and generous, and felt that his wishes were not bounded by the retirement in which he lived, but from his

total ignorance of all beyond it, he was unable to define what those wishes were. Amaranthe was well-grown, lively, and not ill-tempered, notwithstanding having been always injudiciously flattered and indulged by her doating governess. From the stories she had read, or heard her relate, she had formed a general idea of the advantage of personal attractions, which, in her own person robust and awkward, had no great chance of being displayed.

Claribel, who was rather younger than her cousins, was also less of her age. She was pretty and sweet-tempered, but timid and without energy of character. Her timidity and her littleness made her the jest of her companions, and in their play-hours she had often cause to feel and acknowledge their superiority in age and size; but as their teasing of her proceeded more from unchecked liveliness than real ill-nature, and as she was too gentle to retort upon them, their childish squabbles never amounted to serious disagreements, and they lived in perfect harmony together. She was too docile to be naughty, would seldom

fail to learn the task that was given her, but never felt a desire to learn more.

From the continual ill health of the lady, her daughter and niece were almost wholly consigned to the care and culture of the faithful Ursula. She had taught all the children to read, write, and spell, and as much of arithmetic as enabled them to cast up a sum that was not very difficult. She was also anxious that her "own blessed young ladies" should be proficients in the various kinds of needlework, on which she had valued herself in her "better days." In order to accomplish this, and prevent the work being twitched out of their hands, and themselves dragged off by Adrian to play at ball or shuttlecock with him, she would secure the quietness and attention of the party by singing old ballads, and relating marvellous histories, to which they would listen with an eagerness and interest that banished all wish for any other kind of entertainment. Of these she had an abundant store, but what afforded the highest delight to her auditors, was the dexterous feats, or bene-

ficent acts, that she would record of fairies, a race of beings that she professed to have personal knowledge of. She once incautiously hinted, that had not their father, by his pride, offended one of the order, they should all have been in a more prosperous state; but no sooner had the words escaped her than she repented having uttered them, nor could all the entreaties of her pupils ever prevail upon her to satisfy their curiosity upon the subject.

Adrian had nearly completed his twentieth year, Amaranthé was eighteen, and Claribel near sixteen, when a messenger arrived at the castle, bringing with him a packet addressed to its master, the contents of which announced the landing of a very old friend at a place on the coast at a considerable distance. He mentioned having intelligence of infinite consequence to impart, and his intention of proceeding directly to the castle for that purpose, but that he had been only a few hours on shore when he was seized with an illness which prevented his travelling. He therefore besought the gentleman and his lady to lose no time in repairing to the place where he was confined,

that they might themselves receive his communications.

On examining the letter they found that some length of time had elapsed since its date, for those days boasted not of turnpike roads and mail coaches, and the bearer had had a tedious journey of it. When they questioned him concerning their friend, they could gain no farther information, than that, on finding himself too ill to attempt travelling, he had intrusted him with the packet, with strict injunctions to deliver it safely, but of the nature of his disorder they could extort no satisfactory account from him.

The case admitted of no deliberation, and Adrian and Amaranthé found themselves, for the first time in their lives, going to be separated from their parents.

The lively emotions of interest produced by the bustle and novelty of preparation for their departure, and the eager curiosity excited by the extraordinary occurrence that occasioned it, at first predominated over every other feeling; but when the carriage came to the door that was to convey their father and mo-

ther from them, a sensation of concern and dismay extinguished their vivacity at once. The former, with an agitation and warmth of manner unusual in him, embraced his children and niece, saying, as he parted from them, "It is for your sakes, my darlings, that I quit a retreat, from which I believed no consideration could ever again have drawn me, but my absence shall not be long. If I find my old friend able to undertake the journey, we will bring him back with us, and you will soon know how to value such an acquisition to our domestic party. If he should decline accompanying us at present, we will wait but to learn what he has to disclose, and return to you forthwith. It is only the hope of that disclosure producing advantage to you in future that now tempts me from my home." The lady, whose heart seemed too much oppressed by her feelings to give vent to them in words, clasped each of them in silence to her bosom, and with a deep-drawn sigh, and look of anguish that foreboded evil, followed her husband into the carriage. It drove off, attended only by the old and faithful Gabriel,

who had for many years acted in the double capacity of butler and steward.

The young people gazed after it, till the closing of the great gates at the end of the avenue excluded it from their view. They returned into the hall, preserving for some time a mournful silence, when Adrian, who thought tears would be disgraceful to his manhood, rushed into an adjoining apartment, and resting his folded arms upon a table, hid his face in them. Amaranthé began to sob audibly, while tears flowed plentifully down the cheeks of the gentle Claribel.

Though that sweet familiar, yet judicious intercourse, which so happily unites affection with respect, had but little subsisted between these young people and their parents, (for in that light Claribel always considered her uncle and aunt) they both loved and revered them. Never had they experienced severity from them, and but seldom received even a reprimand. When the reserve of their father, and languor of their mother, occasionally gave way to the natural bias of tenderness, and they would testify pleasure and gratification in the

society of the young people, the latter felt such occasions to be those of their highest enjoyments. They had sense to discern the difference of the conversation they were then entertained with from that of Ursula, old Gabriel, or other domestics, whom they were too much in the habit of associating with. Sure of meeting only with indulgence and kindness, they eagerly sought every opportunity of admission to the authors of their being, and protectors of their infancy.

Sadly passed the hours that succeeded their departure, and few were the occupations that could beguile the tediousness of time. Adrian had outgrown his boyish amusements, and found himself very scantily provided with substitutes for them. He had naturally some taste for literature, but though, as has before been said, it was sometimes assisted by his father, it had never been properly cultivated or usefully directed. He would frequently have recourse to books for employment, but from want of habitual application soon grew weary even of those that most engaged his attention.

Amaranthé and Claribel had long satisfied all the pride of Ursula's heart, by the perfection they had attained in the important branches of embroidery that she had taken such pains to instruct them in, but to themselves they failed to afford any source of enjoyment. They felt that they had nothing to work for, and could take little pride in performances which they had nobody to commend. The poor governess had exhausted all her store of histories, as well as all her stock of knowledge, upon her pupils, and they could no longer be entertained with narratives which they could now relate in better words themselves.

The party were generally employed in sauntering about the grounds together, wishing for their parents' return, and forming different conjectures concerning the stranger, and the important intelligence that he was the bearer of.

A fortnight elapsed, and no tidings of the travellers arrived. Another week passed over, and nothing was heard of them; and the inhabitants of the castle began to grow uneasy,

and feel some alarm for their safety. It was so unusual a circumstance for letters to be brought thither, that it occurred to Ursula that some might be lying at the post-office neglected to be forwarded. A messenger was therefore despatched to the post town to inquire for such, but none were there.

Six dreary weeks were gone, and governess, pupils, and the remaining domestics, were obliged to endure all the misery of suspense and apprehension, without any means of obtaining relief of their anxiety.

At the end of that time, as Adrian, his sister, and cousin, were one day standing at a window with their eyes fixed on the avenue, they perceived the gates at the end open, and the carriage that had conveyed their parents from them entering into it. Transported with joy they flew to communicate the glad news through the castle, and then hastened to plant themselves at the great hall door to be in readiness to receive the welcome wanderers.

Slowly drove the vehicle up the avenue,

but so eagerly did they watch its approach, that they remarked not at the time that Gabriel was not attending it. At length it stopped; but what was their surprise and dismay, when, instead of springing into the arms of their parents, as they were preparing to do, they saw only Gabriel, looking more dead than alive, and clad in deep mourning, alight from it!

Gazing on him in speechless terror, they mechanically followed his footsteps into the hall, without one of them having the power to inquire the cause of his extraordinary and alarming appearance. The poor old man dropped into the first seat that offered itself, overcome by his emotions. There he was instantly surrounded by Ursula, and the rest of the houshold, who, at the same time, and in loud voices, beset him with a multitude of questions. It was some time before he could recover himself sufficiently to answer them, or look up; at last after wiping his swollen eyes, and heaving a deep sigh, he began his narrative.

"Dreadful, my beloved children, is the tale

I have to relate! I attended my ever-honoured master and mistress, as you know, on their journey. Tedious and wearisome it proved, for the roads were bad, the weather unfavourable, and horses sometimes not to be had, so that it was two days later than the time we had calculated upon when we reached the fatal sea-port. Would to heaven we had never entered its gates! The place and the few inhabitants we saw looked gloomy, as we did so; and on arriving at the inn, from whence my master's friend had dated his letter, we were informed, with little ceremony or preparation, that he expired the day but one after he had despatched the messenger to the castle. Too soon we learned the direful cause, a malignant epidemic disorder was raging in the place, and daily sweeping off scores of its inhabitants. The poor gentleman, they told us, when he found himself dying, sent for a priest to pray by him, to whose care he consigned a parcel, with a charge to deliver it in safety to the friends who would come to inquire for him. I was sent in search of this priest, as soon as we could procure his direction. Alas! the

poor man had himself soon after fallen a victim to the distemper, and none of his household knew any thing of a parcel, or had ever heard of the gentleman. The people of the inn were honest; they had taken good care of what effects he had with him, and delivered them to my master. The magistrates having issued strict orders, that all bodies should without loss of time be interred in an adjacent ground allotted for the purpose, to prevent, as much as possible, the infection spreading.

"Your dear father appeared overwhelmed with this unexpected calamity; and my excellent lady declared herself so fatigued in body, and harassed in mind, that it was absolutely necessary she should have some days of rest, before she undertook travelling again. In vain did I urge them to quit instantly a place, the remaining in which might be attended with so much danger. My master busied himself in inspecting all the property that had belonged to the deceased. He found clothes, money, and many letters, but none that gave him any insight into what so nearly concerned himself. On the second evening he felt ill, and retired

early to his bed, from whence he never again arose. An hour or two served to convince us, that he was seized with the fatal disorder; and so rapid was its progress, that a few more decided that no hopes of recovery could be entertained. My poor dear distracted mistress quitted not his bedside night or day, though I plainly perceived by her looks on the third morning, that she had taken the infection. I too was growing very ill, but of myself I could take no thought. On the fourth day, my ever-honoured and lamented master breathed his last. Well do I remember the look of silent agony with which your blessed mother contemplated his remains! I remember too her being conveyed into another apartment, and a physician administering a medicine to her. After that, all is a blank in my mind. I knew nothing that passed, and the first consciousness of existence I experienced, was awaking, as it appeared, from a stupor, and finding myself in bed, with an old woman, who looked like a nurse, sitting at some distance from it. On hearing me move she came to me, gave me something to moisten my mouth, and going out of the

room, returned with the physician I had seen before, who feeling my pulse, told the woman the crisis was over, and taking a favourable turn; but that I must be kept quite quiet. Some days passed before I had strength to rise, or to hear the particulars the people had to relate. Too soon, however, was I made acquainted with the awful facts. My mistress survived her loved lord but three days, and both had long been consigned to the earth. The physician, who was remarkably humane, had himself attended to the care of their effects, and visited me constantly during my delirium.

"To what misery did I recover! and what torture to me was the sight of every object in this scene of disease and desolation! As soon as my debilitated frame would permit me, I set out on my dreary journey, to be the bearer of these dismal tidings."

Gabriel had proceeded thus far in his melancholy detail uninterrupted by a word, or even a voice, so deeply was the attention of his audience rivetted upon him; but now sobs and groans resounded on every side. Adrian held his hands to his head, which seemed bursting

with the violence of his feelings. The castle rang with the screams of Amaranthé, and Claribel fell senseless into the arms of a maid servant who stood near her.

Miserable, indeed, was the situation of these unfortunate orphans. Left without fortune, without protection, in this joyless abode, life presented a gloomy prospect before them; yet, how were they to enter a world in which they would feel themselves total strangers, and of the ways of which they were wholly ignorant? Adrian had gathered just knowledge enough from the discontented murmurings of his father, to believe that riches would secure the best reception in it; and his thoughts were continually turned towards the attainment of them; but, uninstructed in all the employments of life, what method could he take in the pursuit? Many vague and romantic schemes presented themselves to his mind, with which he would entertain his sister and cousin, and to which they listened with interest, but without the power of assisting or advising him.

One afternoon, as the mournful trio were sitting together in a saloon, that opened with

glass doors upon the lawn, bewailing the loss of their parents, and their own helpless state, there suddenly appeared before them a lady, whose countenance was fair and captivating; her figure graceful, and her dress light and flowing. They involuntarily rose at her entrance, though astonishment kept them silent. She approached them with a gracious smile, holding in her hand a basket, which appeared to be filled with a profusion of beautiful flowers. "My children," said she, "I am of a race of beings of whom I know you have heard, though probably never expected to be acquainted with. I am the Fairy Felicia; I would have been the fried of your father, but his own conduct prevented it. My elder sister, Benigna, who is more powerful than I am, had long been the friend and protector of your mother: she is all excellence, but more strict, and imposes greater restraint upon those she takes under her care than I do. She disapproved the marriage with your father, which offended him so highly, that he forbade his lady ever holding farther intercourse with her; and Benigna, in return, for-

bade me ever attempting to serve or befriend him, which I was well disposed to do. The errors of the father, however, are not to be visited upon the children. Moved with compassion for your hapless situation, I am come to take you under my future patronage, if you choose to accept of it."

Adrian and his sister, bounding with joy, threw themselves at the fairy's feet, while the former exclaimed, "O, Madam, how can we sufficiently thank you for thus taking pity on our forlorn state. We are, indeed, miserable orphans, without a friend in the world; and how rejoiced must we be to place ourselves under so powerful a protector!" Claribel too, though not given to raptures, endeavoured to express her satisfaction, but in a voice so low that it was scarcely audible by the side of her vociferous cousins.

"Observe then," said the fairy, "that you secure my good offices only by deserving them. If you prove unworthy of my kindness, I shall feel it proper to forsake you; and you will be left in a more deplorable state than this from which I am now desirous to relieve you." The

brother and sister protested again and again, that they should never forgive themselves if they could be guilty of any thing that would incur the displeasure of so good and generous a friend.

"I shall judge of your wisdom," answered Felicia, with a smile, "by your choice." She then displayed her basket, and they discovered that though they thought it had contained a variety of flowers, there were but three sorts. These consisted of the finest damask roses, in full blow; beautiful hyacinths of the brightest azure blue; and simple lilies of the valley, but whose fragrance was delicious to the senses.

"This," said the fairy, holding up one of the first, "will bestow immense, but not inexhaustible riches on its possessor. As long as they make a right use of their wealth, they will find no end to it; but if spent in licentious profusion, that gratifies only luxury and pride, or churlishly grasped solely for their own advantage, without a wish to relieve the necessitous, or benefit their fellow creatures by it, then will the rose begin to wither, and the riches, and its bloom disappear at the same time.

"This" said she, producing a hyacinth, "has the power to endow the person of its possessor with the brightest and most captivating beauty. Admiration will follow their footsteps, and the homage of crowds be paid to their charms. But even you, my children, uninformed as you are, must know that beauty at best is but a fading flower, and the adoration it excites equally transitory. If in those who derive it from this gift, it be accompanied with modesty and humility, it will insure to them all the happiness and gratification that a consciousness of the power to please must naturally confer. But if, on the contrary, it renders them vain, haughty, and unfeeling, demanding universal admiration, and jealous of all who have any claim to share it with them; regardless of the pain they inflict on those whose affections they have seduced, or glorying in the victims of their coquetry, they will find this coveted beauty the source of shame and mortification. Then will the bright tint of this admired flower turn to a sickly and disgusting hue, and the late beauteous person share its fate.

"But here," continued the fairy, taking up

one of the lilies, " is my best and most valuable gift. This modest flower will neither change its hue or lose its fragrance. The person who wisely chuses this, will enjoy the inestimable blessing of content in whatever situation they are placed. No envy will torment their heart at the prosperity of others; no repining at their own less exalted lot; their wishes will be bounded by the sphere in which they move, and care or disappointment be a stranger to their breast.

" And now," she added, " it remains for you all to make your election; remember my words, and prove by your prudence what influence they have had upon you." " Ah," cried Adrian, " how can I hesitate? poor and destitute as we are left, it is fortune I know that is wanting to reinstate us in ease and independence, and to secure us the respect of the world. But, gracious fairy, do not, I beseech you, think me capable of making an ill use of the wealth you will bestow upon me. Believe me, the greatest pleasure I feel in the thoughts of possessing it, is the power it will give me of assisting others, and making all around me

happy." "Rash boy," answered Felicia, "how can you pretend to judge of what your feelings and conduct will be in a situation so wholly new to you? The obscurity in which you have lived, has ill fitted you to encounter the snares and temptations of an interested world. You will be the prey of designers, and repent when too late of the inconsiderate choice you have made. But now, Amaranthé, for your decision." Amaranthé felt a little awkward in declaring her choice, after what the fairy had said; but at length, in some confusion, replied, "I have always longed to be handsome. My governess has told me such pretty stories of beautiful ladies, and of their being so followed and admired, and every body being desirous to serve and please them, that I am sure they must be the happiest of all creatures." "Your governess was very foolish," said the fairy; "she had better have told you of the heart-achs and discontent that generally fall to the lot of beauties." "How can that be?" inquired the astonished girl, "surely being courted and caressed by others, must make one anxious to please and oblige in

return. I should be too happy to be proud and ill-natured." Poor Amaranthé spoke the truth at the time. Her innocent mind was unacquainted with the failings, that the fairy had stated as being usually attendant on beauty. Having never met with competitors, she had not experienced the grievances of rivalship or jealousy; and vanity and coquetry were hardly known to her by name.

"I perceive," said the offended fairy, "you are as opiniated as your brother. I fear the time may come when you will both repent not having paid more regard to my admonitions. And which of these, my gentle Claribel, (turning to her,) shall I present to you?" Claribel timidly answered, "I am not ambitious of riches, they would but embarrass me; neither do I covet beauty—to be an object of general notice, would to me be only distressing. A contented mind must surely be the greatest of all blessings: at least, I can neither imagine or desire a greater. I shall therefore gratefully accept one of your favourite flowers," looking at the lilies.

"Amiable girl," exclaimed the fairy, "there

is no fear of your ever repenting of your choice. How may your cousins wish they had partaken of your prudence; but it is not yet too late to repair their error. I give you." addressing Adrian and Amaranthé, "the remainder of the evening to consider of what I have said. Before you retire to rest, your choice must be finally fixed, for to-morrow it will be irrevocable." With these words, she and the flower-basket disappeared in a moment from their sight.

They remained for some minutes motionless, almost doubting their senses, or whether such an extraordinary visitation had really occurred to them; at length, arousing from their stupor, they agreed to seek Ursula, and relate the adventure to her.

The joy of the poor governess almost exceeded that of her pupils. "Ah," cried she, "it is indeed the sweet fairy Felicia; well do I know her. Do not you remember my children, that I once nearly betrayed the secret of her existence to you? Benigna is, as she says, an excellent fairy, but terribly strict in her notions. She was the friend and guardian of

my dear lady from her infancy; but your father could not endure what he called her severity, or forgive her opposition to his marriage with your mother. All intercourse ceased between them; and Felicia was obliged to withdraw her protection from your father. This gave him a disgust to the whole race of faries, and he would not suffer you to know that he had ever had any connexion with them."

The simple Ursula could not disapprove the choice of Adrian and Amaranthé. To see him surrounded with splendour, and her with admirers, would gratify the fondest wishes of her heart. Gabriel was now summoned to the conference. He by no means agreed with Ursula in her approbation. "Alas, my dear, young master," said he to Adrian, "it was riches that proved the bane of your father's happiness and comfort. He mistook the court that was paid him while in possession of them, for the real respect and good will that he fancied was his due, though to say truth he took no other means of obtaining them. When his fortune was gone, his pretended friends soon followed; and that occasioned the reserve and

moroseness with which you must have observed his temper was tinctured. Inexperienced as you are in the world, wealth may prove but a treacherous snare; and as the fairy wisely says, you will probably fall a prey to wicked designers." "A truce, I beseech you," cried the impatient Adrian, "with these dismal forebodings. Neither you nor the fairy can make me believe, that being happy myself, and having the power to make others so, can prove my destruction. Depend upon it, old man," continued he, with an arch smile, and laying his hand on Gabriel's shoulder, "when you begin to reap the advantages of my fortune, which you shall certainly do, you will be vastly glad that I did not listen to your preaching!" Gabriel shook his head with a look of distrust. "And what, my sweet young lady," addressing Amaranthé, "can beauty do for you? I remember you dear mother the fairest of the fair, and yet her lot in life was far from a happy one." "O dear Gabriel," interrupted she, "you are ten times more disagreeable than the fairy. Here is the very thing offered to me that I have all my life been wishing for, and then

I am told I must not accept of it. What evil can attend being handsome? I shall like to look at myself in the glass; I shall like to see other people looking at me; shall be pleased and happy all the day long; and what harm is there in that?"

"Well," said Gabriel with a sigh, "I am still of opinion that your cousin has made the wisest choice." "O yes, the wisest choice for Claribel, doubtless. As long as she may go creeping unnoticed about the world, taking no trouble herself, or being troubled by others, that is all she desires. I have no notion of such tame satisfaction." To this Claribel only answered by a smile.

They all retired at the usual hour to their beds, but to Adrian and his sister it was not to rest. The thoughts of what the morrow would produce kept them waking the greater part of the night. Soon as the sun darted his first rays into the chamber, Adrian sprang from his bed, and looking eagerly around, discovered the desired rose appearing with luxuriant glow upon the toilet before him. Enraptured, he hastened to seize his prize, when he perceived a fold-

ed paper lying by it, in which on opening, he found these lines:

Since Adrian, spite of warning voice,
This specious gift decides thy choice,
Slight not the counsel that would fain
Preserve thee from remorse and pain.

While boasting coffers richly stor'd,
And plenty smiling on thy board,
In grandeur's costly garbs array'd,
With servile homage basely paid
From summon'd tribes of venal bands,
That wanton luxury commands,
Let thy untainted mind beware
And shun corruption's lurking snare.

If, when of long-sought wealth possess'd,
Thou fail to succour the distress'd;
And flatterers feed in splendid state,
Yet drive the needy from thy gate,
Soon will destructive vice impart,
Her baneful influence to thy heart,
Chasing those purer feelings thence
The meed of blameless innocence.
Then shall this drooping rose decree
The loss of fortune and of me;
For harden'd heart and vicious mind
From fairies ne'er protection find.

Yet let discretion bounty guide,
Nor succour sloth, nor pamper pride,

To suff'ring want give ready ear,
And dry the modest suppliant's tear,
Yet still the grateful boon dispense
With lib'ral hand, but guarded sense.

Then may this dangerous treasure deal
Those blessings virtuous mortals feel,
And favour'd Adrian haply prove
Deserving of esteem and love.

Charming fairy, he exclaimed, mistrust me not; I value this precious gift too highly ever to abuse it; so saying he ran off to find Amaranthé, whom he met coming as hastily from her apartment with the hyacinth in her hand. Look, look, shouted Adrian, here is my darling rose;—and see, answered his sister, I have got my sweet hyacinth, but with it I found this paper, containing some mighty crabbed, dismal words, that I could very well have dispensed with. "Aye, my gift was accompanied with a sort of a lecture too. It is very strange that so powerful a fairy should not be able to discern my good intentions, without my making so many protestations of them,—but what says your paper?" and unfolding it read as follows:

Beauty, that peerless gem whose magic smile
Can teach the frigid heart with warmth to glow,
Or smooth the frowning Cynic's sullen brow,
And the cold glance of cautious age beguile;

Still decks the nymph who wears her potent spell
With sparkling eye, and gaily dimpled cheek
That sportive ease and conscious pow'r bespeak,
Nor dreads that time her cherish'd pride may quell.

While flatt'ring crowds proclaim unrivall'd sway
With haughty triumph glows her radiant bloom,
But soon the bright illusion fades away
And yields to vanity's unwelcome doom.
So, Amaranthé, may this flower decay
And blighted beauty seek the shelt'ring tomb.

They then proceeded together to the apartment of Claribel, whom they found in a sweet slumber, from which their exclamations soon aroused her. Look at this stupid girl, cried Amaranthé, if she be not sleeping as soundly and unconcernedly as if she had never heard of the wonderful events this morning was to produce. And yet, said Adrian, I dare to say the fairy has not forgotten her, and casting his eyes round soon espied the lily. "Aye, there is the favourite flower, and I hope accompanied by some sage admonitions as well as ours."—

Then advancing towards it, "Sure enough, here is the attendant scroll," and opening it immediately, read aloud:

When mild contentment rules the breast
Unchecked the pleasure, sweet the rest,
The passing hours that close;
No fruitless wish disturbs the maid,
No blasted hopes her peace invade
Who courts the calm repose.

The placid smile, the brow serene,
Unstudied glance, unruffled mien,
Glad approbation gain;
From rankling spleen, and envy free,
The venomed pang of jealousy
Essays to wound in vain.

Fair as the lily's polished hue
Impending fate shall meet her view
Who shuns ambition's lure;
And thus shall gentle Claribel
In tranquil ease serenely dwell
From vain regrets secure.

Well, the fairy promises you fair at least, cousin, said he, and your lily smells very sweet, and I hope we shall all be very happy together with our separate gifts!

Fairies had such dexterous, ingenious me-

thods of bringing to pass, whatever they projected, that it is not necessary to inquire by what means Adrian soon found himself master of wealth to the utmost extent of his wishes, or that the plain features and awkward person of Amaranthé were changed into the most dazzling beauty of countenance, and perfect symmetry of form. In Claribel the effects of the fairy's power were the least visible. Her nature had always been so placid, that it could admit of no great increase of contentment, but she was perfectly at peace with herself and others, and free from any portion of envy at the riches of one cousin, or the beauty of the other.

The news was soon circulated through the surrounding country that the old melancholy castle was now become the scene of affluence and hospitality. In consequence it was not long before visitors and petitioners poured in from every quarter. The now superbly furnished mansion, and magnificent establishment of Adrian, did not prove more attractive than the charms of his sister, which excited the wonder and admiration of all beholders. The

native modesty of a young person bred up in seclusion, for some time prevailed over every other sensation, and she almost repented of the gift she had solicited. She shrunk abashed from the perpetual and ardent gaze of all who approached her, and the admiration she had thought so desirable, was at first oppressive and painful to her. Pure and genuine feelings of uncorrupted nature, why are ye ever subdued? what art or ornament can ever replace the fascinating blush that mantles on the cheek of innocence!

Adrian found himself at the summit of his wishes. His dwelling was thronged with joyous spirits like himself, who courted and flattered him, always extolling in exaggerated terms his generosity and powers of pleasing. Invitations came from far and near, and neighbouring families vied with each other in giving costly entertainments to this charming brother and sister, nor was Claribel ever left out of the party. Adrian forgot not the injunctions of his patroness. He gave orders that no object of charity should ever be turned without relief from the castle, but absorbed in the pursuit of

pleasure, he gave himself no leisure to learn the nature of their wants, or to ascertain that that they were in fact objects of charity.

Amongst other sources of festivity, games were instituted in which the skill and activity of the rival youths were exerted, and on such occasions the prize adjudged to the victor, was generally laid as a trophy at the feet of the beautiful Amaranthé. This indeed was a trial to poor mortal vanity. She soon grew so accustomed to the distinction paid to her charms, that instead of oppresive it became necessary to her. The brother and sister who fondly loved each other, who from their infancy had shared all their little joys, and little griefs together, were mutually delighted at the praises the other received. Amaranthé loved to hear of the excellent qualities of the heart, and liberal temper and vivacity of her brother, and Adrian's heart bounded with joy and swelled with pride at the homage paid to the beauty of his sister. But too soon these exquisite feelings, derived from the purest source of affection human nature is capable of, were extinguished. Engaged in the pursuit of their se-

parate enjoyments, they ceased to feel an interest in those of each other. Claribel was the quiet spectator of the distinctions of her cousins. She served as a sort of cabinet to Amaranthé, in which she deposited all the little histories of her triumphs, and the flattery that had been amply bestowed upon her; and Claribel would listen to the details with kind complacency, and sometimes an idea would occur to her that the extravagant joy and gratification they appeared to produce in her cousin, must be worth sharing, but the gift of the fairy secured her from any anxious wish to do so.—Though she occasionally obtained notice from those whom she met in the parties in which she mixed, for no one could fail to feel courtesy towards so mild and inoffensive a being, she was aware that she was considered as little more than a cypher by the side of her cousins, but she was not liable to discontent, and repined not at the observation.

Adrian had been too much occupied by his lively companions to think of making inquiries after the objects of his bounty, but a long list was brought him by Gabriel of mendicants,

who had been relieved, which amounted to a sum that astonished him. Is it possible, said he, there can be so many unfortunate creatures in want? It is well the fairy has supplied me so liberally, or I might soon come to be in want myself, but I think, he proudly added, she must be satisfied with my manner of employing my wealth. One day a person desired to be admitted to him, who told him a long pitiful story of his being reduced from easy circumstances by a rich and powerful man, who in revenge for some offence he had given him, had contrived his ruin, and driven him with a large helpless family to beggary. The natural good disposition of Adrian was manifested at this recital. He exclaimed, with honest warmth against such shameful cruelty, and gave the man a large sum of money to alleviate his unmerited misfortune. The petitioner was profuse in his acknowledgments, expatiated on the benefit of riches, when entrusted in such hands, and retired invoking a thousand blessings on his benefactor.

Adrian felt all the satisfaction of the most approving self-complacency. Excellent Fe-

licia, he exclaimed aloud, your's is indeed a most precious gift, to be enabled to perform such actions, and merit such gratitude, and I flatter myself you will allow that I have strictly obeyed your injunctions!

The next day Gabriel informed him that he had discovered the person to be a worthless impostor, who had ruined himself by extravagance and profligacy, and in return for Adrian's generosity, had gone about making a jest of his credulity. Adrian uttered the most vehement expressions of resentment and indignation. To find himself only a dupe when he had thought himself a pattern of benevolence, was a sore check upon his self applause, and he formed many prudent resolutions to be more upon his guard in future. Some days after, in passing through his grounds, he was accosted by a man who exhibited an appearance of extreme wretchedness. His face was wan, and his features sunken. His dimmed eye seemed hardly able to discern the object on which it gazed; and his tottering limbs with difficulty supported his feeble frame. His moving lips appeared to be framing a prayer

for compassion, but his hollow voice had not power to give it sound. Adrian involuntarily stopped, regarding him with looks of commiseration, but suddenly recollecting himself—No, said he, I will not again be imposed upon; I must not forget that the fairy enjoins discretion as well as charity, and hastily passed on, congratulating himself on this effort of prudence.

It was not long before he learned that the unfortunate being had, in despair of obtaining any relief of his sufferings, sought an obscure shelter, in which he soon terminated his miserable existence.

Adrian's heart smote him severely; he felt that he would have given half his possessions to have recalled the past hours; and the circumstance for a short period dwelt heavily on his mind; but contrition was soon effaced by dissipation.

When this brother and sister, who had suddenly burst in such radiance upon the astonished neighbourhood, had ceased to be novelties, it was not long before they ceased also to excite the interest and good liking that their first appearance had created.

All the rational members of their acquaintance, who had been agreeably struck with Adrian's good humoured vivacity and generous spirit, grew disappointed and displeased at finding they must look for nothing beyond. Uninformed in almost every branch of knowledge, destitute of the acquirements generally possessed by, and absolutely indispensable in a young man at his time of life, and of the rank in which he appeared in it, they discovered that though he could laugh with the joyous, he was incapable of conversing with the serious, and it was chiefly by the idle and ignorant like himself, that his society continued to be sought.

The astonishment that the outward attractions of Amaranthé had produced in all beholders, was soon succeeded by astonishment that she possessed no others. No improved understanding, no cultivated taste, accompanied the charms of person, and it was agreed that she must be looked at, and not listened to. The graces of figure could not compensate for the want of graces of mind, nor a polished skin be deemed a substitute for a polished manner. The gift of the fairy had secured her from

awkwardness of gesture, but it could not conceal awkwardness of expression and address.

Still, however, both continued to have followers in abundance. The castle was the constant resort of gay dissipated youths, who, in the good spirits and good cheer of Adrian, enjoyed all they wished or cared for; and who took pains to initiate him in all their vicious courses. He had no real relish for the pleasures of the bottle, but was soon laughed out of his moderation; and rather than be thought wanting in spirit, poor Adrian plunged into excesses for which he had no natural taste, and in which he found little acquired gratification. They thought proper also to find fault with the decorations of the castle, on which Adrian had valued himself, and suggested many useless and expensive alterations. These were immediately ordered, but when the poor tradesmen, who had worked hard to oblige him, made their demands, his choice companions exclaimed in terms of violent wrath against them, assuring him it was extremely insolent in those people to expect payment as soon as their work was done, and that he ought to make

them wait his leisure. The fact was, these wicked advisers, who were ignorant of the source from whence his fortune was derived, were afraid, if he paid his debts, he would not have money left to squander upon them. Adrian had not the slightest intention of defrauding any of the persons to whom he was indebted; he felt secure of being able to pay them whenever he chose it, and honestly intended to do so; but too weak in mind to bid defiance to the ridicule of those whom he ought to have despised, he suffered himself to be guided by them. In vain did Gabriel remonstrate; Gabriel had long lost his influence, though his young master's heart was not yet so currupted as to dismiss the worthy man from his service, which his associates, who called him a tiresome preaching old fellow, would fain have persuaded him to do.

Several gentlemen who wished to pay their addresses to Amaranthé, had applied to Adrian for his interest, and also for information respecting the fortune they were to receive with her. Adrian expressed great indignation at such inquiries being made. He had really, in his

heart, formed the most generous intentions towards his sister, but in the enthusiasm with which he first contemplated her beauty, and from the sincere affection he then felt for her, he conceived that she deserved the most disinterested attachment, and refused to make any promise of bestowing a portion upon her.

The first person who paid any serious attention to Amaranthé, was in her opinion, as, generally speaking, I fancy in that of all other young ladies in the same case, the most charming creature in the world. He was followed by a second, and she found him as charming; but when a succession of adorers appeared, she was completely perplexed. Her heart was incapable of making an election, and she began to think it would be very dull to fix upon one, and by that means lose the adulation and flattery of all the others. She therefore received them all alike, and divided her attention and her smiles equally amongst them. Thus the innocent Amaranthé, who was unacquainted with the name of coquetry, soon grew expert in the practice. On her first entrance into society she had formed an inti-

mate acquaintance with Ethelinde, the daughter of a family distinguished for goodness and benevolence, and who lived in a handsome, though not profuse style. Ethelinde had nothing of the dazzling beauty of Amaranthé to boast of, her features were not so perfect, nor her complexion so brilliant, but her countenance was enlightened by intelligence, and her smiles were the smiles of modesty, and sweetness of temper. She was always unstudied and unaffected, and in her person and appearance were combined ease and elegance, with the irresistible charm of the most engaging feminine softness. Her understanding was excellent, and well cultivated, her manners correct, and her heart the seat of virtue and purity. Perfectly free from any meanness of temper, she felt no envy at the beauty of Amaranthé, but was, on the contrary, an unfeigned admirer of it, and eagerly sought her friendship. Amaranthé, who for some time felt gratified and obliged by Ethelinde's early notice, was equally desirous of cultivating her's, but ere many weeks had elapsed, they mutually discovered that they were not companions for each other.

Ethelinde grew weary of hearing no other conversation than descriptions of the fine dresses her friend had worn at the different entertainments she had been at, or repetitions of all the nonsense that had been addressed to her there, and Amaranthé thought her deplorably dull and disagreeable, for wanting to talk of any thing else. Ethelinde was both too kind-hearted and too well-bred to appear to shun Amaranthé, and Amaranthé, who felt quite secure of never finding a rival in Ethelinde, continued to call her friend. She began, however, by degrees to suspect that she had been a little mistaken in this satisfactory point. It is true that whenever she appeared in public she was immediately surrounded by all the gentlemen in the room, but she could not avoid observing, that when Ethelinde was there also, many of them would turn to her, and when once engaged in conversation with her, never again quit her side, for that of her friend. This was sufficient ground for her conceiving a rooted dislike to the unassuming and unsuspicious Ethelinde.

An important addition was now made to

the society into which Adrian and Amaranthé had been introduced, by the arrival of a young gentleman lately returned from travelling, to take possession of a large estate, and noble mansion annexed to it, in that country. Lionel had every thing that could recommend him to the favour of all to whom he was made known. Handsome and elegant in his person, his mind was stored with information, his taste refined, his conversation instructive and entertaining, and his manners affable and polished. Every father openly courted him as a companion and example to his son, and every mother secretly wished him to become the husband of her daughter.

Lionel was charmed with the brother and sister on his first introduction to them. He liked the frank cordiality of Adrian, and became the professed slave of Amaranthé's beauty. It required no length of time for penetration like Lionel's to discover his error in regard to Adrian; he found he had mistaken vivacity for genius, and frankness of manner for generosity of heart, when in fact his favourite proved unformed and untaught, indif-

ferent to the opinion of all whom he ought to have valued, and given up to idleness and self-indulgence. Such a companion was quitted without any effort of resolution, but the sister's power over him did not yield so easily. Amaranthé's vanity had been too much flattered by such a conquest, for her to endeavour to conceal the satisfaction it afforded her, and the enamoured Lionel was willing to attribute the approbation she evinced, to genuine affection. He confessed himself disappointed in her mental qualities, but he laid all that to the want of education, and the blame upon those who brought her up. He delighted in the thought of instructing and cultivating her mind himself, and dwelt with rapture on the prospect of possessing such a creature, formed exactly to his own taste, and according to his own rules of right. The devoted lover indulged himself, in these pleasing expectations during several interviews that he had with his idol, when not interrupted by the presence of any other candidates for her favour; but when he saw her in company with some of her previous adorers, and observed the evident pleasure and compla-

cency with which she listened to them all by turns, nothing could exceed his surprise and indignation. What! had she no more regard for him than for any of these senseless coxcombs? Were the smiles and attention that had so captivated him to be equally shared by them? This was not to be borne. He could have endured her ignorance, even a fool might be tolerated, but an unfeeling coquette never could. From that moment Amaranthé, with all her beauty, was dismissed from his heart for ever.

During his attendance on Amaranthé, Lionel had often remarked with approbation the meek and unaffected demeanor of Claribel. He had never indeed heard her converse much, but he judged that her silence was owing to timidity, and fancied that under so retired a manner, might be concealed solid sense, taste, and judgment. Her person, though not strikingly handsome, was pleasing, and her temper and disposition appeared to be perfectly amiable. He began therefore to pay her very serious attention, but here again poor Lionel had only to lament his mistake. He found

Claribel quite as untutored as her cousins, without a spark more desire of improvement. He was not likely to meet with a repulse from so gentle a creature, but the acquiescence with which she received his assiduities seemed more the result of habitual passiveness than of reciprocal attachment. She betrayed no emotion of pleasure at his approach, or of concern at his departure. She listened to his conversation as he hoped with interest, but when describing what he considered as requisite points to insure happiness and respectability, he could perceive no symptoms of regret that their sentiments so little corresponded, nor could his avowed opinions awaken in her any exertion to render herself more acceptable to him. When he had taken sufficient time to study her character, he decided that the inelegant mirth, and ungoverned vanity of Amaranthé were preferable to the dawdling insipidity of Claribel. After this decision Lionel ceased to be a visitor at the castle.

The pride of Amaranthè had never before experienced so severe a wound. Her consequence was lessened in her own eyes, and she

felt that it would be so in those of others, by the desertion of such a lover, for she had sense enough to discern the superiority of Lionel over all her other admirers. She could appreciate his worth, but she could not controul her own too long indulged inclinations, and was still too artless to conceal the wrong bias they had taken. The disappointment had a visible effect upon her temper: she grew peevish, and dissatisfied with every thing about her. She resolved to leave no means untried to regain the heart of Lionel, and the suggestion of a rival in his affection made her absolutely outrageous. She had so little considered Claribel in that light, that she had not deigned to notice Lionel's attention to her, which indeed her vanity whispered was merely a feint to pique herself, and to give him an opportunity of still hovering near her. The gift of the fairy, which had operated so much to Claribel's disadvantage in the opinion of her lover, secured her from sharing the keen mortification of her cousin at his loss.

Some time after this had happened, an invitation was sent to the inhabitants of the cas-

tle to an entertainment, which was to consist of a trial of skill in archery in the morning, and a ball in the evening. Adrian, who was now wholly devoted to his ill-chosen companions, had made some engagement he liked better with them, and would not go, and Claribel was confined at home by indisposition. Amaranthé looked forward with the most flattering anticipation to this proving the scene of her triumph, and restoring all her power over Lionel, who she knew was to be a principal guest there. She exhausted all her invention in contriving the most becoming dresses for both occasions, and selected every ornament that she thought would add lusture to her beauty. The anxiously expected morning arrrived, and Amaranthé set forth in all her glory. She found a large company assembled in the part of the grounds marked out for the archery, where a tent was erected ingeniously fitted up, and a handsome collation prepared in it. The gentlemen who were to engage in the contest were all properly equipped for the purpose. Amongst the most conspicuous was Lionel, who with his bow in his hand and

quiver on his shoulder, was compared by some of the company to the god of love. In a group of ladies opposite to her, Amaranthé discerned Ethelinde very simply attired, but looking so elegant, so unaffectedly good humoured, and desirous to please and be pleased, that no one could behold her without being prepossessed in her favour. She accosted Amaranthé with the utmost kindness, who very coldly accepted her proffered hand, for she felt an inward acknowledgment of superiority that fretted her beyond endurance. Nor could she at all account for it, having settled in her own mind, quite to her satisfaction, that she had never seen any thing half so ugly or so ill dressed.

The game began, and after each candidate for victory had exerted his strength and skill, Lionel was unanimously proclaimed the conqueror. The mistress of the feast had tastefully entwined a wreath of laurel, which stepping forward she, with an appropriate and polite compliment, placed upon the head of Lionel. Amaranthé's heart beat violently, for she felt assured of receiving her accustomed

homage, and had ready all her sweetest smiles, and most engaging complaisance, as she saw Lionel approach the spot where she was seated. She found, however, that she might as well have reserved them for a fitter occasion, for he passed her without notice, and with a graceful bow, and look that bespoke respect and esteem, laid his trophy at the feet of Ethelinde. Amaranthé had no strength of mind to command herself on such a trial, nor could she conceal the disappointment and vexation it cost her, and was still more insupportably irritated by the general murmur of approbation that accompanied this action of Lionel. She refused to partake of the refreshments, and went home burning with feelings of resentment against him, and of most malignant animosity towards Ethelinde. Still her vanity was not subdued: she determined that the ball, where she meant to appear in a blaze of glittering ornaments, that she believed would render her beauty irresistible, should repay her for all the mortifications of the morning. She recounted the insult, as she thought fit to call it, that had been offered to her, in terms of

bitter wrath to Claribel, who attended her toilet; but comforted herself with the near prospect of recrimination, and declared she should have far more pleasure in crushing the pride of that insolent little ugly moppet Ethelinde, than in captivating the first lord in the land. Claribel listened with patience and pity to the detail of her lamentable misfortunes, and disclosure of her amiable intentions, and at last ventured to say—"But, my dear cousin, are you not afraid of incurring the displeasure of the fairy, by falling into the errors she cautioned you against? You may remember she threatened to withdraw her favour if you were guilty of jealousy and envy, and do you know, I do not think you look near so well as you used to do."

To this remark Amaranthé for some moments answered only by surveying her cousin with a look of ineffable scorn, at last, her lips quivering with anger, she said—"Really, my dainty Claribel, whatever the fairy may do by me, I am afraid her precious gift to you has failed in its effect. I thought *you*, at any rate, were to be secured from the dominion of envy

and spite." "Upon my word, cousin," answered Claribel mildly, "I am unconscious of ever having been subject to either. Since the fairy first appeared to us, I never felt less disposed to envy her favours to you than at this moment, and what can there be spiteful in thinking you do not look so well as you used to do?"

Ursula, who was present, assented to the opinion of Claribel. "Indeed, my sweet young lady," said she, "your cousin is right. I have lately observed, with pain and apprehension, your altered looks. I believe the racketing life you have led so long disagrees with you, and am seriously fearful that you will injure your health if you continue it."

It was in vain to urge any arguments against the self-conceit of Amaranthé: that her beauty could be in any degree diminished was a supposition that she would not admit into her thoughts. She added more ornaments to the profusion that already glittered on her person, and doubted not that, with such aids, she should eclipse every belle who would appear at the entertainment. Under this happy

persuasion she entered the ball-room, but did not long remain under its cheering influence. No emotion seemed excited by her appearance, no gaze followed her footsteps; those of her former admirers, whom she saw there, rather shunned than approached her, and those who were strangers did not appear to notice her. After she had been seated some little time however, she was in joyful expectation of having her best wishes fulfilled, for she saw Lionel advancing, who, on coming opposite to her, stopped short, and fixed his eyes intently upon her.

Much as her heart fluttered, and her cheeks glowed at this almost unhoped for circumstance, she could not avoid discovering that his looks betrayed more of astonishment than of admiration. Suddenly seeming to recollect himself he slightly bowed, and passing on went up to Ethelinde, whom he immediately engaged for his partner. Fortunately for Amaranthé the bustle and confusion of the dance just then beginning, screened her from the observations that her violent agitation must otherwise have drawn upon her. The dance indeed

began, but no one solicited the honour of her fair hand. Amazed, appalled, she knew not what to make of it, at length, rising up, she drew near a party who were in earnest conversation, and did not perceive her. "Is it possible," she heard one of them say, "that that ordinary awkward looking girl, so bedizened with finery, should be the beautiful Amaranthé, of whom I have heard so much, and who my chief purpose in coming hither was to see?" "Believe me," answered another, "what I tell you is true. What has happened to her I cannot conjecture, but I do assure you that not many weeks ago she was the most beautiful creature my eyes ever beheld."

"Oh, oh," said Amaranthé to herself, "now I discern the truth. This is a vile conspiracy amongst my enemies. Some of my wicked rivals, unable to submit to my superior attractions, have planned this scheme on purpose to mortify me, but they shall find themselves defeated in their atrocious designs." She then reared up her head, and stalked along the room with all the stately airs she could assume, but all in vain. Few of the company noticed

her at all, and to those who did, she was evidently an object of ridicule. She had not command enough over herself to endure this long with patience. Abruptly quitting the assembly, she returned home in a state of mind and temper that threatened her with insanity. When arrived there she tore off all her gaudy apparel without once looking in the glass, and threw herself into bed, where for some hours she lay tumbling and tossing, but at last fell into a doze, from which she did not awake until mid-day. As soon as she arose she summoned Claribel, that she might give vent to her fury at the detestable events of the evening. Claribel heard the relation of her disgrace with unfeigned concern, but all the time she was speaking looked earnestly at her with marks of excessive surprise. After some hesitation, she, trembling as she spoke, said, "Pray, cousin, have you lately looked at your hyacinth?" The question operated like an electric shock upon Amaranthé. The truth flashed across her mind. She considered a moment, and then rushed to the cabinet where Felicia's pernicious gift was deposited. There indeed she

found it with its "bright tint turned to a sickly and disgusting hue." She contemplated it with an aspect of wild despair, then with an effort of desperate resolution flew back to the glass, where, for the first time for many months, she looked at herself with eyes not blinded by vanity. What a spectacle presented itself to her view! Gladly would she have found herself only reduced to her original plainness. Her eyes then, though they sparkled not with the lustre with which the fairy afterwards endowed them, were yet brightened by the vivacity of youth. The texture of her skin was not so delicate, but her cheeks glowed with ruddy health, and though no fascinating dimples accompanied her smiles, they were the playful smiles of innocence. Now, sad reverse! her eyes were dimmed and sunk in her head, her cheeks hollow and of ghastly paleness, and the malevolent passions that had corroded her heart, were traced in deep furrows over her countenance. Almost frozen with horror she uttered a piercing shriek, and fell lifeless on the floor. Claribel affrighted, endeavoured to raise her, and called for assist-

ance, but no one came near her. She thought she heard an unusual disturbance in the castle. Sounds of strange voices speaking loud, trampling of feet, and clapping of doors met her ear, and appeared as if a general uproar prevailed throughout. After she had for some time tried in vain to recover Amaranthé, Ursula hastily entered the apartment, her face pale with terror and dismay, which were increased by seeing the alarming state of her young mistress. Claribel, while she assisted in restoring her, briefly related what had happened, and the poor governess, on hearing it, broke out into bitter lamentations. "Ah! wicked, treacherous fairy," said she, "how have you abused my poor innocent children! would that you had never appeared with your vile gifts, only to betray them to their ruin, and plunge them into a thousand times greater misery than they could have experienced had they never seen you."

Claribel earnestly enquired her meaning, and the cause of the confusion she had heard, and with difficulty, amidst her sobs and moans, gathered what Ursula had herself learned from

Gabriel. The creditors of Adrian, hearing of the extravagant style in which he lived, concluded he must soon expend his fortune, and that they should then have no chance of receiving what was due to them. They, therefore, determined to come in a body, and insist upon immediate payment. Adrian, though extremely enraged, resolved, in spite of the opposition of his associates, to satisfy all their demands at once that he might be rid of them. He accordingly repaired to the coffers where his treasures were secured, but on opening found them all empty. He exclaimed loudly that he had been basely robbed; then flew to every chest, desk, or bureau in which he had been used to seek a supply, but found not a single piece of money, or article of value of any kind: while searching the last place of safety he could think of, he was suddenly struck with the sight of his rose, which had fallen from the stalk, and every leaf withered and dead: frantic with despair, he rushed all over the castle proclaiming himself ruined, but hardly sensible of what he said or did. On hearing this, the profligate crew, who had

called themselves his friends, speedily made off, nor would stay even to offer him consolation. The creditors incensed at being thus defrauded of their right, thought it best to make themselves what amends they could, and began tearing away all the costly furniture, and seizing upon every thing valuable they could find. The servants too, thinking they should have no other method of being paid, had joined in the general plunder, and were all taking their departure as soon as they could secure what they had pillaged.

Amaranthé revived before Ursula had finished her dismal narrative, but she attended not to it, nor seemed conscious of any thing that passed. Claribel and Ursula continued administering restoratives to her, when the door opened, and the form of Adrian, but far more resembling that of a spectre, slowly entered. He placed himself on a seat, and fixed his haggard eyes upon his sister. She raised her's to him, but no sound gave utterance to the feelings their looks mutually expressed. It was not the mild grief that could be soothed by sympathy; it was the gloomy anguish of

remorse, the humiliating sense of unworthiness, the incurable torture of shame. Claribel and Ursula looked at them in speechless sorrow, for no ray of comfort presented itself to alleviate their sufferings.

Thus were these unfortunate young people, by the indulgence of their own wishes, and the attainment of what they supposed could produce only gratification and happiness, reduced to a state of apparently irremediable distress. Even Claribel shared in the general misery. Not that the gift of the fairy had lost its influence upon her; the lily was fresh as ever. She was contented in her own person, and formed no wishes for herself; but she could not behold the wretched condition of her friends unmoved. Though not subject to strong emotions, her heart was tender and affectionate. Her cousins were her sole objects of attachment, and it was still unabated towards them. Ursula could do nothing but bewail their sad destiny; she was weak and helpless. Gabriel was the only rational person of the party. He collected together the

little that remained out of the wreck of the possessions, and tried to put things in some order to make them more comfortable. The generous old man never reminded them of the advice he had given, or took to himself the credit that was his due for his better judgment.

Claribel had used all the arguments she could devise to reconcile Amaranthé to her altered state, but with little success. One remarkably fine day she prevailed upon her to go out into the air: they walked to a part of the grounds that had in their childhood been appropriated as their play place. Here, while resting on a bench, they were joined by Adrian. The brother and sister now found words to relieve the weight of woe that oppressed them, but it was by heaping invectives on the deceitful Felicia. From accusing the fairy they began to upbraid each other. "You, Amaranthé," said Adrian, "have no right to complain: you might at least have been spared the misfortune of poverty. Had it not been for your abominable vanity and coquetry,

you might have been happily and nobly settled."

"You are unjust to say so, Adrian," retorted his sister; "you know very well it was your refusing to bestow a fortune upon me, that prevented many of my lovers from soliciting my hand in marriage; but you were given up to selfishness, and cared not what became of me."

"For pity's sake, my dear cousins," cried Claribel, "do not quarrel. Remember, destitute orphans as we are, we have nothing left in this world but each other, and if we are not united, what is to become of us?"

Adrian was touched; looking tenderly on his sister, "Claribel is right," said he. "We are, indeed, bereaved of every thing else, and shall we forsake each other? Ah, Amarathé!" he continued, his eyes swimming in tears, "time was when all our joys and all our wishes centred in each other. How fondly you once loved me—and is it at an end? Will you love me no more?" The native good feelings of Amaranthé's heart, that had so long

lain dormant, were now revived. Bursting into an agony of crying, she threw her arms round her brother's neck, and sobbed out, "Yes, yes, dear Adrian; I love you better than ever. Oh, do but be kind to me, and I will cease to deplore the loss of my beauty." After embracing her affectionately, Adrian, looking mournfully round, observed—"This was the scene of our childish sports. How joyously we bounded like fawns over this lawn! When turning our hoops or tossing our balls, how little cared I for riches or you for beauty! And there," pointing with his hand, "is the shrubbery where we used to play at hide and seek, and laugh at poor Claribel for not being able to find us. See the woodbine that you and she used to twine round my hat and crook, when I played at being a shepherd."

"And those," said Amaranthé, "are the trees you so often climbed to get birds' eggs for Claribel and me to string, when we pretended to be hermits, and called them our rosaries!"

"Happy, happy days of blessed inno-

cence!" groaned out her brother; "would to heaven ye could be recalled! Never again would I barter ye for grandeur and licentiousness!"

While the unhappy trio continued weeping over these painful recollections, they suddenly observed an extraordinary appearance in the air. A large machine, resembling a car, was hovering in it, and at length descending slowly to the earth fixed itself at no great distance from them. They then saw a lady clad in a purple robe, with a long white wand in her hand, step out of it and advance towards them. They were immediately struck with the belief that it was the fairy, but with what different sensations did the brother and sister now greet her, to those which her first appearance had occasioned! Confused and dismayed, they would have fled from her presence had not terror rendered them motionless, for they doubted not that she was come to reproach them, if not to punish their ill conduct. When she drew nearer, and they ventured to look at her again, they discovered that the figure was

taller and more dignified than that of Felicia. Her face was not so fair, and its expression was more solemn, but her countenance was more commanding, and her aspect altogether inspired awe and veneration. "Perhaps," whispered Claribel, "it is the fairy Benigna." The minds of her cousins assented to this suggestion, but it by no means diminished their apprehensions. If they had so much cause to dread the censure of Felicia, what had they to hope from the severe Benigna?

Trembling, and not daring to speak or move, they stood before her, while she regarded them for some time in silence, with looks that lost much of their solemnity, and expressed pity and benevolence. Then, in a mild tone, said, "Poor hapless victims of ignorance and error, your consciences tell you that I am come to inflict the chastisement due to your folly and guilt; but lay aside your fears. I can allow for and compassionate the offences of feeble mortality. I am come to take you from this scene of desolation and disgrace, which can only remind you of lost happiness.

Are you willing to trust yourselves with me?" Whatever the private inclinations of the party might be, they were too much in awe of this powerful being to offer any resistance to her will: they only bowed in token of submission. She then placed them all in the car, and mounting it herself after them, waved her wand when the machine arose with a gentle motion into the air, which it wafted them through, but at what rate, or whither to, they could not judge. They were so amazed, and their senses so bewildered, that they almost doubted if they were awake, or whether all that had passed were not a dream!

They could not calculate how long they had been travelling in this easy manner, when they found the vehicle again descending to the earth, where it rested before a white house, that had every appearance of neatness and comfort, though not of magnificence.

It was situated in the middle of a garden, laid out in excellent taste, and well stored with fruits, flowers, and shrubs of all kinds, bounded by verdant meadows, with a fine river passing

through them, and the surrounding country richly cultivated, and luxuriantly beautiful.

Their conductress desired them to enter the house, where the first objects that met their view, were Ursula and Gabriel, who had been conveyed thither by the agents of the fairy, and who welcomed them with raptures of joy.

Benigna led them through the apartments which were sufficiently spacious for convenience, and fitted up with elegance and propriety. The last she introduced them into was, a library, furnished with a large collection of books, maps, globes, &c. "And now, my young friends," said she, "do you think you can be happy in such a habitation as this?" Adrian, willing to ingratiate himself in her opinion, promptly replied, "Ah, Madam, we shall be most happy to receive any favour from you. You, no doubt, will always continue your generous kindness, and not desert us like the treacherous Felicia."

"Presumptuous mortal!" answered Benigna, with a frown, "what right have you or

your sister to call Felicia treacherous? Did you not obstinately persist in choosing the gifts she warned you against? And did either of you practise the good precepts she gave you with them? Had they been observed, you are conscious that you might still have been rich, and Amaranthé handsome. But come," she added, observing the effect her words had upon them, "be not alarmed. My design is not to arraign, but to instruct. The fact is, my sister is not treacherous, but she is injudicious. Her power is very limited, and the few gifts she has to bestow, are more likely to ensnare than to benefit those whom she means to serve. She gave you, indeed, good advice, but she could not endow you with the good sense that would enable you to follow it. Even you, my quiet Claribel, have not, I fancy, profited much by her favor. Say, were you very happy in the possession of your lily?" Claribel, after considering a little, answered, "I do not know that I was absolutely happy. I was, indeed, always contented, as she promised I should be, and never felt in-

clined to repine, or be vexed at any thing; but I do not remember ever experiencing any particular pleasure." "No," returned the fairy, "nor would any one under such circumstances. The content Felicia bestowed on you, was not the happy result of a well-regulated mind, satisfied with its own exertions, and the performance of those duties incumbent on all rational beings. It was indolence, mistaken for a virtue. A being endued with reason, of which it obeys not the dictates; with faculties, of which it makes no use, but is content to occupy its station in life without fulfilling the purposes for which it was placed there, is scarcely less censurable than those who waste their time in riot and dissipation. Others may reap some advantage from their follies, but no benefit can be derived from a mere moving machine."

The vaunted favorite of Felicia found herself no higher in the esteem of Benigna than her indiscreet cousins, and felt ready to sink under her reproving eye; but, resuming her benevolent aspect, the fairy continuing her dis-

course, said, " take courage, my children, you are none of you irreclaimable, and may hope, by your future conduct, to make some amends for past transgressions. The fault has not been so much in yourselves, as in those whose duty it was to have prepared you for the trials and temptations, that you had little chance of passing through the world without encountering. Now, let me try if this wand cannot confer more lasting happiness than the roses and hyacinths of my sister." So saying, she waved it gently over their heads. In a moment, they all felt like new-created beings. They seemed to awaken to a different sense of existence. They became painfully sensible of their own deficiences, and of the deplorable want of education, yet the pain was alleviated by the cheering influence of the light let in upon them, and the earnest desire they felt for improvement.

" You are now," said Benigna, " all conscious of the folly and uselessness of your past lives; and if my wand has done its duty, you are equally willing to repair the evils they have

been the cause of. As I before said, you have been less to blame than others. You wanted instruction in every thing, but the chief and most important instruction you wanted, was—principle! Had that been properly inculcated into you, all the ills that have befallen you, might have been avoided. In this apartment, (looking round,) you will find store for your minds, and employment of the most pleasing kind for your time; but this (placing her hand on a very large volume that was on a desk before her) must be your first and most assiduous study. In these writings you will find how unnecessary is the aid of fairies to your welfare, when by humbly imploring that of the all-powerful Being who never forsakes those who resort to him, you will secure those endless blessings that magic has not to bestow.

"But you probably wish to know where you are. Learn then that this abode, and the fortune annexed to it, is no gift of mine; it is the bequest of your uncle, who died in a foreign country. He, as well as the rest of her friends, disapproved of his sister's connexion with a

person who had always conducted himself very ill towards him; and when the marriage took place, his resentment was so great, that he forsook his native country, accompanied by the friend whose return to it cost you the loss of your parents. On his death-bed, your uncle's heart relented in favour of his sister, to whom and her children, he bequeathed his property, with an equal portion to his niece, Claribel. He consigned the deed of gift to that friend, exacting a promise from him, that he would deliver it only into your mother's hands. You already know how he was prevented doing that; and when the priest, to whom he entrusted it, also died, I took care to secure the deed for the purpose of restoring it to your mother; but death defeated all our intentions.

"I should not have withheld your own property so long from you, had not my sister taken you so hastily under her protection; but as I surmised what the result of her patronage would be, I determined to reserve this resource against the hour of distress, to which I had little doubt her favours would reduce you.

And now, my children, it only remains for you to make a right use of these valuable possessions. You have not boundless riches, but have sufficient to satisfy all your own reasonable wants, and to administer to the wants of your suffering fellow beings. I have furnished you with the means, as well as the desire of improvement. Let the remembrance of your past errors, and the folly of your first wishes, operate on your future conduct. Fail not to observe these injunctions, and you will secure the love and esteem of all whose good opinion you wish to obtain; and though I may never appear to you again, my attendant spirit and good offices shall not be withdrawn."

So saying, the excellent fairy Benigna, casting on them all a look of maternal affection, again gently waved her powerful wand, and vanished!

The fairy indeed vanished, and the wand was seen no more; but their influence was still felt by the now happy and deserving orphans. They assiduously obeyed her commands in seeking knowledge and instruction

and took care that their first study should be that volume to which she had directed their attention. There Adrian learned that "in Godliness is great riches," and Amaranthé found in "the beauty of holiness"—that pure gratification and unabated happiness, that beauty of person, had no chance of bestowing. Claribel, by "faith and good works," experienced content, accompanied by real enjoyment, instead of the negative satisfaction derived from her lily. She became as animated and active as she had before been indolent and helpless.

Adrian, in acquiring wisdom, was able to indulge his natural good propensities. He knew how to manage the fortune he possessed, and by learning to be frugal could afford to be generous. His vivacity, now tempered by good sense, was the delight of all to whom he was known; and the happiness springing from a cultivated mind and corrected heart, rendered him once more a joyous, but never a licentious spirit.

Amaranthé, though never restored to the

radiant beauty of the hyacinth, regained her original healthy and sprightly looks. The ease of her heart was manifested in her countenance. She could behold beauty in others without a repining sigh, nor coveted any other admiration than what her uniform good conduct and commendable desire to please and oblige, always procured for her.

Ursula had often the gratification of seeing her sweet young ladies employed in the embroidery she had so industriously taught them for the benefit of their indigent neighbours; and the faithful Gabriel enjoyed the exquisite delight of knowing that his honoured young master and mistresses obtained the blessings of the poor, and the respect of the rich.

Thus these children of the old castle, whose lives began under such unpromising auspices, and for whom I hope my young readers are excessively interested, ended them as prosperously as mere human beings can ever hope to do. They were happy because they were rational; and being rational, they felt well dis-

posed to laugh heartily at all absurd stories about Fairies, Flower Baskets, and White Wands!

THE END.

BARNARD AND FARLEY,
Skinner-Street, London.